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NOTES ON ROMAN ARTISTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

II. ARCHITECTS.

[PLATE XXI.]

During the summer of 1889, I spent several weeks in exploring the Roman province for the study of its inedited monuments. Although expecting to publish, before long, a study on the subject of the mediæval artists of this region, I will here describe the works of some architects whose names, so far as I know, are new.

MARTINUS.

This Martinus is an architect of the twelfth century, and, judging from the style of his work, he may be considered to have been one of the best. His inscription is on the porch of the church of Sant' Erasmo at Veroli, the ancient Verulæ. This city of the Hernici, like its neighbors Anagni (Anagnia), Alatri (Aletrium), and Ferentino (Ferentinum), was among the cities of Campania that remained throughout the Middle Ages under the direct control of the Popes. The art of these cities is strictly Roman, except in cases of some strong local influence like that of the great neighboring monasteries of Casamari and Fossanova. At Segni, Anagni, and Ferentino are still records of the activity of the Roman families of artists in the XII and XIII centuries, the Cosmati, the Vassalletti, and the school of Paulus. To these should now be added Martinus. Some years ago, I had a photograph taken of the Romanesque porch of the church of SANT' ERASMO AT VEROLI (PL. XXI). Again, last summer (1889), I passed through this mountain village, and, while resting the horses, sat on the parapet in front of the porch admiring its strength and simplicity, the harmony of its proportions and tone. The sun was shining at such an angle that I noticed, for the first time, some letters cut in the second row of stones under the cornice, between and above the left-hand and middle arches of the porch. The characters were large and carefully cut in the pure classic style of about the middle of the XII century, and read: *EST MANIBVS FACTVS MARTINI QVEM PROBAT ARCVS*. Two facts are evident: (1) Martin

was proud of his work—the porch, which he calls *arcus*, he evidently regards as a good example of his style ; (2) he considered that he had a style of construction peculiar to himself, for he says that this work can be recognized as his by its style.

The porch consists of three round arches of unequal span and height, corresponding to the three aisles of the church. Of the church itself I need not speak, as it is quite modernized ; and I will omit the tower also, which, though mediæval, seems to be by another architect. A second story, with three round-headed windows, was added to the porch at the time of the restoration of the church. A flight of steps leads from the street to a platform from which one enters the porch by four steps ; three more lead into the church. The dimensions of the porch are approximately as follows : length, 31 ft. ; width, 14 ft. ; height, 26 ft. The interior consists of three simple unribbed cross-vaults on a square plan, separated by rather heavy *arcs-doubleaux* which rest upon engaged columns with composite capitals attached to the outer piers, and upon simple pilasters. The central arch, corresponding to the nave, has of course a greater span than the side arches, but these, also, are unequal in size, that on the left being much the lower and narrower. The cause of this seems to have been the lack of space on that side.

Two points of detail are especially to be noticed : (1) the profiles of cornice and mouldings, and (2) the style of the decorative sculpture. The use of a retreating arch in interiors was common with architects of the Roman School, and it is also to be observed in the buildings erected in this region by the Cistercian order between about 1175 and 1225. Here we see it. One naturally turns for comparison to the few porches of the kind in the province—at Casamari, Casauria, and Piperno. But here the profile is different, the two planes being connected by the soft flowing line of a concave moulding or scotia, instead of forming right angles. But in earlier buildings, slightly anterior, in fact, to the porch of S. Erasmo, we find the use of the double angular arch ; for example, in the doors of the neighboring cathedral of Ferentino (end XI cent.), and in the windows of the cathedral at Anagni (middle XI cent.). In interiors, the same device was used to break the monotony of the blank walls. Earliest of all is the basilica of S. Elia, near Nepi, a work of the X or early XI century, where the arches are supported on columns. In the XII century, the columns are replaced by clustered piers, as in the cathedral of S. Maria di Castello at Corneto. There is nothing

remarkable about the heavy capitals or the profiles of the rather clumsy bases of the columns or those of the bases of the piers : of greater elegance is the cornice that frames the upper part of the porch. The taste of the artist shows itself in the form and decoration of the archivolts that frame the arcade. They are the key-note to the entire porch ; they give to it dignity and peculiar style, add breadth to the arches, help in the play of light and shade, and delight by the delicacy of their sculpture. The details of this decoration in the central archway is as follows. First, a row of trefoils connected by stems, every other one being reversed : a similar decoration, but more advanced and without reversal, is found in the main doorway of the cathedral of Cività Castellana executed, in about 1180, by the Roman artists Laurentius and his son Jacobus. Next comes the familiar classic egg-and-dart moulding ; then, the equally familiar and classic pearl ornament ; and, finally, the row of cubes placed at intervals which on a somewhat larger scale was so popular an appendix to the under part of cornices, during this and the following century. A similar but less elaborate decoration encircles the other arches. All the elements are classic ; and the execution itself is worthy of an artist of the best period of the empire. With Martinus, as with the earlier Cosmati and the Vassalletti, the classic tradition was supreme ; and this is but another proof that it entered into the smallest details of their work. After examining these archivolts, it is safe to say that the engaged columns below are by another hand than that of Martinus.

The porch of Sant' Erasmo is, in my experience, the finest in Central Italy. With the exception of the numerous architrave porches of the Roman school with their Ionic columns and classic details, porches extending the entire width of the church are quite unusual throughout Italy, whereas in France, for instance, they are quite common. Italian architects were either satisfied with none, or confined themselves, after the fashion of earlier examples in Rome (*Santa Prassede, etc.*), to building out the central portal, as at Verona, Modena, Trento, *etc.* One has to roam over Lombardy and Tuscany quite generally before finding wide porches : perhaps the finest example is that of the Cathedral of Lucca added to the church in 1204. Monastic churches, however, were more likely to have porches : in France the closed porches of the Clunisian churches are almost as large as the body of the church. The Cistercian and Benedictine porches were more modest. Those of the second half of the XII century and the beginning of the XIII built

in this region are similar in general form to this one of Veroli, but all unite to differ in one respect : their central arch alone is round-headed, those on either side are pointed, being thus enabled to keep the same height while having a smaller span, corresponding to the narrower side-aisles. The Cistercian monastery of Casamari has a porch which dates from about 1203, if not earlier : the corresponding earlier porch at the monastery of Fossanova has been destroyed ; but we can conceive what it was from a study of the porch of the cathedral of the neighboring Piperno, constructed, probably in imitation of it, by the architect Antonio di Rabatto, shortly after 1180. A few years earlier, a similar porch was built before the Benedictine church of S. Clemente di Casauria in the Roman Abruzzi. All of these are lacking in the peculiar qualities that form the charm of the *chef-d'œuvre* of Martinus, as it would be easy to show, were this the place to do so.

GRIMUHALDUS.

Crypts were even more important adjuncts to churches than porches, in this part of Italy, especially during the Romanesque period : this was partly on account of their frequency, partly by reason of their extent. In my study of the architecture of the XI and XII centuries in the Roman province, I found that the crypts were often the only part that remained of a church that had been torn down or remodelled by the vandals of the XVIII century. Though, at first sight, there is an apparent monotony in these crypts, a careful study cannot fail to reveal the individuality of each one. One of the largest and most interesting is that of the cathedral of Sutri. This church was the work of Roman architects, for the town is only about forty miles to the north of the Eternal city,¹ and the building still bears traces of their handiwork. An inscription of 1170 informs us that Nicolaus de Angelo, with his son, executed the high altar, probably, after the usual fashion of the Roman artists, with a beautiful decoration of mosaic-work. It is now destroyed : but a cornice with a XII-century inscription, mentioning the name of bishop Petrus, which I disinterred from the neighboring yard, may belong to it. At all events, the central doorway, with its mosaic-work, fragments of the old pavement, the campanile, and parts of old frescos, still remain of the XII-century work, after the usual process of destruction had been indulged in during the XVIII century. Fortunately, the crypt, though blocked up,

¹ See my article, *An early rock-cut church at Sutri*, JOURNAL, V, pp. 320-30.

was left untouched, and, as it was being re-opened at the time of my visit during the summer of 1889, I was among the first to descend into its depths. The only change it had suffered was the removal, at the demolition in 1743, of four of the columns to be placed in a chapel of the church above. I read the name of the architect upon the capital of the first column opposite the flight of steps that leads down from the left aisle: † G̃RMVHALDV | PRB ◁ ACCOL'A, *Grimuhaldus presbyter accolyta*.

We do not meet with monk-artists nearly so often in Italy as in the rest of Europe, during the twelfth century; and the lay-artists had almost a monopoly, especially in this province, where they were formed

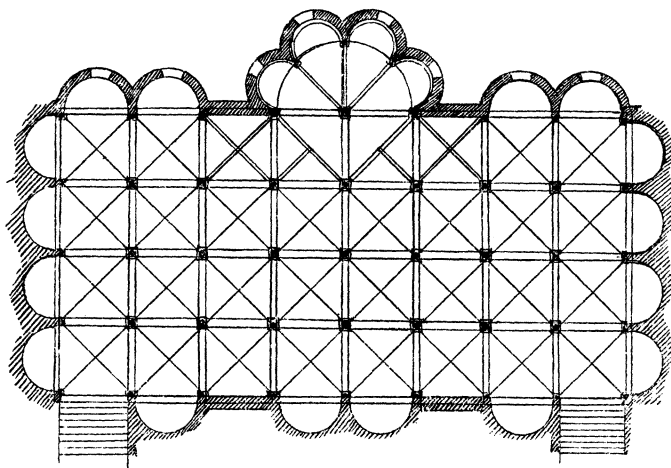


FIG. 1.—Ground-plan of the Crypt of the Cathedral at Sutri.

into regular schools. But here is an exception. A priest of the cathedral was also the architect of its crypt at the time when the entire edifice was made over about the middle of the twelfth century. This construction is so unusual in its form, is planned on a scale so large and sumptuous, and carried out with such care in its details, as to make it worthy of being placed in the front rank of Italian crypts (*Figure 1*). The vaults are supported by twenty-two columns, seven for each of the three rows that divide the crypt into four aisles, and one opposite the centre of the apse. Each aisle ends, not against a flat wall but in a small apse or semicircular niche. Four of these niches form the apse, and sixteen others surround the rest of the construction. This entire

arrangement of niches is singular and original : I do not remember to have met it elsewhere. The quadri-apsidal choir is also strange in a country which so staunchly retained the small and simple semicircular apse of the basilica, vaulted with its semi-dome. But this is not the only peculiarity. While all the rest of the spaces between the columns are covered with plain unribbed cross-vaults, the two opposite to the choir have tripartite ribbed vaults that join the quadripartite vault of the choir, which is also ribbed. This is an example of comparatively elaborate vaulting interesting for the time and region, as ribs were not used in this province, barring exceptions, until the latter part of the century. The vaults are all separated by transverse arches, and the columns are not waifs and strays from the ruins of older buildings, as is so often the case at this period : they are monoliths of good proportions and with fairly-carved capitals, of equal size, quarried for the building.

PETRUS GULIMARI DE PIPERNO.

The third architect on my list of inedited names is a native of the city of Piperno, the ancient Privernum, situated in the Monti Lepini in a region which before the Italian occupation was a centre of brigandage in the Papal States.² Only a few miles away, down in the marshy swamps of the valley below, was the largest and most famous of the Cistercian monasteries of Italy, Fossanova. Against the opposite range of hills are dotted several hamlets. Principal among these is the town of San Lorenzo, now called Amaseno. When Pope Innocent III, in 1208, visited Fossanova and the towns and monasteries on the opposite line of Sabine hills, Anagni, Alatri, Ferentino, Veroli, and Casamari, he also stopped for a night at San Lorenzo. Then, the present church was not built : this took place more than a half-century later. When the work was commenced we do not know, but it was finished in 1291 on the fourth of April, according to an inscription on the pulpit. The architects, as the inscription tells us, were *Petrus Gulimari* of Piperno and his two sons *Morisū* and *Jacobus*. The copy of the inscription, made for me by Sig. Ettore Maldura, reads in this way, but there seem to be some mistakes in the reading, several of which I have corrected, though I remain in doubt as to the reading of the artist's name. The entire inscription reads : IN NOMINE DOMINI AMEN ANNO NATIVITATIS EIVSDEM MCCLXXXI INDICIONE

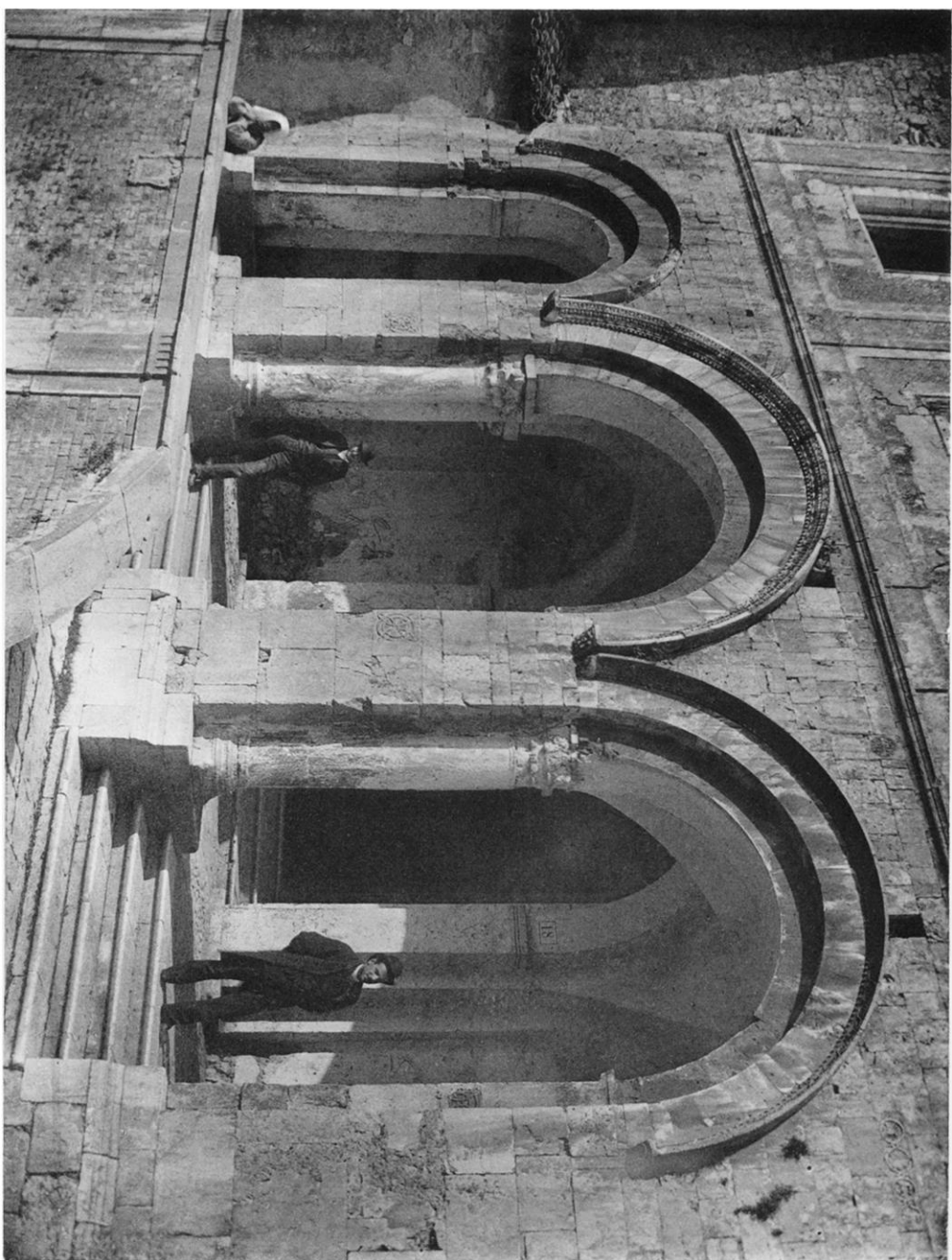
² See my article on *The Monastery of Fossanova*, pp. 14-46.

QVARTA MENSE APRILIS PONTIFICATVS DOMINI NICOLAI PAPAE IIII
ANNO QVARTO OPVS HVIVS ECCLESIAE ET ISTIVS PVLPI TVS COM-
PLETVM FVIT PER MAGISTROS PETRV M GVLIMARI DE PIPERNO ET
MORISVM AC JACOBVM FILIOS EIVS QVORVM ANIMAE REQVIESCANT
IN PACE AMEN.

The church is a simple three-aisled construction, with pointed arches and windows, unribbed cross-vaults, and simple square piers with engaged columns. It is the clearest possible imitation, on a reduced scale, of the great Cistercian churches of Fossanova and Casamari, and doubtless the architects took the former for their model. In fact, it is probable that they graduated from the Cistercian school of architecture, which spread over this entire region during the last years of the twelfth and the entire course of the thirteenth century. I shall not describe the church any further, in order not to forestall the details which will be in place in the volume on Cistercian architecture in Italy on which I am at present engaged.

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PORCH OF THE CHURCH OF SANT' ERASMO AT VEROLI.